

Dark Days - Prague II

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1 Description of the artwork

1.1 Topic and Compilation

These photographs are a small excerpt of about 70 works which emerged from journeys to several cities, among them New York, Prague, and Venice. The whole cycle is called Dark Days - Venice, Prague, New York. Its topic is the isolation of the modern human being in today's big cities. The reality of the city inhabitants undergoes an estrangement by stylistic devices such as coarse grain, blur, camera shake, and multiple exposures.

The selected images show scenes of a street in Prague, Czech Republic. They have been taken from a large distance at night. The humans shown in the photographs are not visible in the negatives with the naked eye. Only an extreme enlargement makes them visible. On the one hand, the four images of this compilation correspond to each other by several intended similarities and variations of the same theme. On the other hand, correspondence between the images in the four by four tableau is given by the fact that the upper two and the lower two images correspond by the same level of detail, respectively. These photographs are taken in a short time interval at one place. The similarities and variations are obtained by either slight or larger movements of the camera or by taking different sections of the same negative.

1.2 Technique

The technical process to generate these images is a hybrid one. The photographs have been taken on panchromatic film. The relevant sections of the negatives have been scanned with high resolution (4000 ppi). After applying the usual image enhancement techniques, artificial grain is added to the images to further exaggerate the effect of the film grain. Only after this the images are scaled up to their

final size. It is important that the grain is added before the enlargement, because otherwise the pointillist effect, especially interesting from different viewing distances, is missed. Finally, a triplex filter with yellowish and purple tones is applied to the black and white image for atmospheric reasons.

2 The Artist

Gabriele Peters lives in Bochum, Germany. She has studied Mathematics and Psychology at Ruhr-University Bochum. For her research on the perception of three-dimensional objects at the Institute for Neural Computation in Bochum she received her PhD from the Faculty of Technology of the University Bielefeld in 2002. She worked on image processing, computer graphics, information visualization, and machine learning for vision applications at the Graphical Systems Department of the University Dortmund. During stays as a guest professor in the Vision group at the California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, USA, she took part in the development of new techniques for the generation of photo panoramas.

Since more than 10 years she is active as an artistic photographer, as well. Her photographic and artistic education she received at the Center of Art and Music at Ruhr-University Bochum from 1996 to 2000. She had the chance to present her works and projects in several group and single exhibitions, for example in the Museum Bochum, the museum of arts of the city of Bochum and at SIGGRAPH 2008, the world's largest conference and exhibition on Computer Graphics. From 2007 to 2010 she was professor for Visual Computing at the University of Applied Sciences and Arts in Dortmund. Since 2010 she holds the chair for Human-Computer Interaction at the FernUniversität in Hagen, Germany.

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